

# Voyaging Across History: Discovering the UK's Preserved Boats and Their Timeless Tales

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The UK has an incredible and impressive maritime history. From Viking invasions to the Tudor Navy and beyond, the UK's seafaring heritage is legendary and can still be seen today in one of the many boats and ships that have been lovingly preserved and are still afloat today, many of which are now in museums, teaching us all about their historical past.

Here at the [Salcombe Maritime Museum](#), we are passionate about preserving and promoting the history of these ships, and we invite you to join us and sail through time as we explore some of the UK's most historic boats that still sail the waters today:

**The Salcombe Yawl** - The Salcombe Yawl is a traditional fishing boat that has been used in the waters around Salcombe for over 200 years. The Yawl is a small, open boat with a single mast and a yawl sail and was originally used for catching fish such as mackerel and herring. Today, the Salcombe [Yawl is mainly used for racing](#), but it remains an important part of the town's heritage and can be seen sailing in the waters around Salcombe throughout the summer months. The Yawl is a testament to the UK's seafaring traditions and a beloved icon of Salcombe's maritime history.



Salcombe Yawl Y123

**The Kingswear Castle** - The *Kingswear Castle* is a remarkable historical boat that continues to grace the waters today. [Built in 1924](#), this beautiful paddle steamer served as a passenger ferry on the River Dart in Devon, England. With its distinctive red funnel and elegant design,



The paddle steamer *Kingswear Castle* on the River Dart

the *Kingswear Castle* was a beloved sight on the river, transporting locals and tourists alike. Although it ceased its ferry service in 1965, the vessel was meticulously restored and now operates as a delightful heritage steamship, offering scenic cruises along the picturesque River Dart. Visitors of the ship have the opportunity to step aboard this floating time capsule, explore its charming interiors, and imagine the bygone era of river travel.

**Thames Barge** - The Thames Barge is a historic flat-bottomed cargo vessel that was once used for transporting goods such as coal, bricks, and grain on the River Thames during the [17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries](#). These iconic sailing vessels are an incredibly important part of the UK's maritime history and played a significant role in the country's industrial development. Today, just a handful of Thames Barges remain and have been restored and are used for pleasure cruises and as floating museums, providing visitors with a unique opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of the river as it once was.



The Thames barge *Hydrogen*

**The *Cutty Sark*** - *Cutty Sark* is a historic clipper ship that was built in 1869 and is now preserved as a museum ship in Greenwich, London. The *Cutty Sark* was one of [the fastest sailing ships of its time](#) and is famous for its role in the tea trade between China and Britain. Today, visitors can explore the ship's restored interiors and learn about its fascinating history through interactive exhibits and displays. A superb model of the *Cutty Sark*, made by John Harmer of Salcombe, is on display in the Maritime Museum



The *Cutty Sark* in its dry berth at Greenwich



A model of the *Cutty Sark* in the Maritime Museum

**The Paddle Steamer *Waverley*** - One of the UK's most iconic historic boats. Built in 1947, the *Waverley* is the last seagoing paddle steamer in the world and has been designated as a National Historic Fleet vessel. The *Waverley* has a rich history, having served as a passenger ferry on the Firth of Clyde and later as a pleasure steamer. The ship has undergone [several restorations over the years](#) and continues to operate today as a popular tourist attraction, offering cruises around the UK's coast and waterways. The *Waverley* is a testament to the UK's seafaring heritage and is a cherished part of the country's maritime history.



The paddle steamer *Waverley*



**The *Golden Hinde*** - The *Golden Hinde* is a replica of the 16th-century galleon that was captained by Sir Francis Drake during his circumnavigation of the world. The replica ship was built in the 1970s and is now [permanently moored in London](#), where it serves as a museum and educational facility. A second full-size replica of Drake's ship has been a feature of Brixham harbour in South Devon for over fifty years. Visitors to the two ships can explore the decks, cabins, and holds, and learn about life aboard a Tudor-era sailing vessel. Both offer a fascinating glimpse into the UK's seafaring history and provide a unique opportunity to step back in time and experience life as a sailor during the Age of Exploration. .

The UK is also home to several historic warships still afloat, including:



*HMS Victory*

**HMS *Victory*** - HMS *Victory* is a historic warship that was launched in 1765 and is now preserved as a museum ship in Portsmouth, England. The ship is most famous for its role as Admiral Lord Nelson's [flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805](#), where it played a pivotal role in securing victory for the British Navy. Today, visitors can explore the ship's decks, admire its impressive gun, and learn about its fascinating history through interactive exhibits and displays.

**HMS *Belfast*** - HMS *Belfast* is another historic warship that [was launched in 1938](#) and served in the Royal Navy during World War II and the Korean War. The ship is now preserved as a museum ship in London, and visitors can explore its nine decks and learn about life aboard a warship during the 20th century. HMS *Belfast* is famous for its role in the D-Day landings in 1944, and visitors can see the ship's original gun turrets and other weapons systems. The ship also has interactive exhibits and displays that highlight the experiences of the sailors who served aboard it. HMS *Belfast* is a unique and important part of the UK's naval heritage and provides visitors with a fascinating glimpse into the country's seafaring history.



*HMS Belfast*

These historic boats and ships are not just artefacts of the past - they are still afloat and actively used and enjoyed today. Each vessel has its own unique story to tell and exploring them can provide a fascinating insight into the UK's seafaring history.